Under the proposed Act, buildings are divided into three classes:—

1st. Dwelling-houses.

2nd. Warehouses, workshops, and similar buildings.

3rd. Public buildings.

The two first classes are subdivided into rates, according to the size and height, and when in either case they exceed the limits prescribed, they are removed into the third class.

The two first classes are subject to the supervision of district surveyors, as has been the case heretofore.

The third class are to be placed under the special superintendence of the official referees.

By a reference to Schedule C, part II., you will more clearly understand this arrangement, and as it has a most important practical bearing upon the questions involved, your committee request your special attention to the schedule as it now stands, and also to the various modifications suggested.

The Bill proposes to make drainage imperative.

The broad and important features of the measure being thus before you, your committee request you to refer to the Bill itself, in which they suggest various alterations, and with regard to the detailed instructions contained in which, they have to propose certain modifications. The observations which follow will give you the opinion of your committee on these several matters, and the clauses to which they immediately refer are—

Clause	10 ..	Page	8 ..	Line	18
,,	14 ..	,,	10 ..	,,	23
,,	15 ..	,,	11 ..	,,	43
,,	21 ..	,,	16 ..	,,	30
,,	25 ..	,,	19 ..	,,	14
,,	42 ..	,,	28 ..	,,	8
,,	51 ..	,,	34 ..	,,	40
,,	53 ..	,,	36 ..	,,	40
Also Schedule C	Part II. ..	,,	64		
,, C....	IV. ..	,,	66		
,, C....	VI. ..	,,	67		
,, D....	I. ..	,,	68		
,, D....	II. ..	,,	69		
,, D....	III. ..	,,	70 and 71		
,, D....	VI. ..	,,	72		
,, E....	..	,,	73		
,, F....	..	,,	73, 74, and 75		
,, H....	..	,,	76		
,, I....	..	,,	77		

Clause 10.—The change proposed in the thickness of the party-walls of the smaller-sized houses would render it impossible to fulfil some engagements. As, for instance, a party having entered into a contract to erect upon ground a certain number of small houses, may be prevented, by the additional room required for the thicker walls, from placing that number of houses upon the ground; besides which additional expense would be entailed upon each house. Thus, if 100 houses are to be built, having each 12 feet frontage, three entire houses would be thrown out; and the probable return of rent diminished in the proportion of 3 per cent.

Provision should, therefore, be made to compensate persons under such engagements. The party under contract would be compelled to expend all the money and receive a smaller return; whereas the ground landlord would have a better article, and his reversion would be improved in value.

Clause 14.—If the surveyor should be wrong, there should be some remedy afforded to the owner or builder, otherwise the clause might be very oppressive.

Clause 15.—It is suggested that in this clause the form should be, that if the official referees do not give notice of defect within fourteen days of the survey, then the buildings may be used; but if this should be considered objectionable, then some power should exist to compel the attention of the official referee; as, otherwise, the building may be suspended indefinitely, without the owner having the opportunity of knowing why, or the means of setting the matter right.

Clause 21.—The present form in reference to this matter is three months; and for all practical purposes it has been found to be sufficient. Much inconvenience may result from the longer time.

Clause 42.—Your committee suggest that the words "to the satisfaction of the surveyor" should be erased; because, if he were dissatisfied he would [illegible] official referees; whereas now, if litigious, he might withhold his consent and entail expense and vexation.

The clauses affecting the size of rooms to be used as dwellings is difficult to be dealt with, because, although it appears probable that some present injury might be indicted thereby upon parties owning houses in which there are rooms let out in separate occupations, yet, for a paramount necessity can be established with reference to the question of public health for the discontinuance of such occupation, your committee feel that it would not become us, as builders, to throw any obstacle in the way of a manifest public benefit; at the same time, it is suggested that if there was a discretion vested in the district surveyor, so many circumstances, besides the mere question of size, go to make up the comparative healthiness of a dwelling-room, that much of the private injury might be obviated by the wise use of this discretion, and all the public mischief avoided; for which purpose, your committee would suggest, that it should be allowed to the district surveyor to license for dwelling any room which, though not as large as required by this Act, yet had a sufficient door and window and chimney, and was so situated in respect of width of opposite street, or other circumstances, as not to appear to him to be unhealthy for such occupation.

Clause 53.—The powers given to remove nuisances within thirty years, your committee consider to be a question not affecting us as builders, but of great importance to proprietors of gas-works, &c., and owners of premises employed in the specified trades.

This Bill provides that noxious and offensive trades shall not be carried on nearer than forty feet from a public way, nor nearer than fifty feet to any other building of the dwelling-house class, and that all such as now are in existence shall, at the end of thirty years, be removed beyond the limits of this Act. Now, although this provision affects the owners of such properties only, yet as it is accompanied by another which makes it illegal to construct dwelling-houses on ground within the prescribed distance from premises so occupied, this would render a great injustice to the owners of lands so adjoining.

Your committee further feel, that the prohibition of offensive trades in this form is an unnecessary interference with the vested interests of a large number of persons, and that in the existing laws relating to nuisances, the caution of land-holders for the protection and improvement of their own property, and in the efficient drainage of the larger portion of the metropolis (and the improvement in this respect to be anticipated from this Bill), the public have quite a sufficient security in this matter; at the same time, dangerous manufactures and explosive trades, such as lucifer-match making, &c., should obviously be removed from populous neighbourhoods.

Schedule C, page 64.—It is proposed that the superficial area of the rates should be modified as suggested, because the sizes of the schedule, as proposed in the Bill, would throw all moderate houses into so high a class as to increase their expense unnecessarily; and the same remark applies to the thickness of party-walls. The thickness suggested will be amply sufficient for the weights that will have to be sustained: and because of the small amount of combustible material that such houses would contain, the resistance to fire would be complete.

The thicknesses of party-walls for the several rates are suggested as being, in the opinion of your committee, and as the result of their experience, sufficient.

Moreover, with reference to the lower class of buildings, it is most desirable that no unnecessary expense should be imposed, because if this class of dwelling is made too costly, the effect will be to huddle together many families into houses of somewhat larger size; whereas, both the health and morality of the lower classes would be improved, by facility being afforded for the erection of such dwellings as would accommodate the smaller number; indeed, as far as possible, single families in separate tenements: besides which, the expense, if increased, would necessarily fall eventually upon the poor, and tend to the decrease of their comfort in other respects.

If it should be thought that the arrangement [illegible] wall to the third rate of building, while it extends the area beyond the size limited by the existing Act for a much higher rate of building, it should be recollected that most of the four-story houses of the present day have been erected under such a rate as placed the upper story in the roof; and the experience of the past fifty years has shewn that the party-walls so built have been quite a sufficient protection against the mischiefs of fire. And although to the area suggested this may appear thin, yet it should be remembered that any house having four stories, however small the area, would come under the operation of the clause; and in crowded districts more stories would be required, and thus the house would be removed into a higher rate. And the sufficiency of this wall will be the more apparent when it is borne in mind that now all wood will be kept out of party-walls of this thickness, which was not the case under the existing Act. And further, that this is the minimum thickness of walls.

Besides which, this rate of building will, under the new limits of the Act, take in a very large number of houses in the outskirts of the town, where additional expense would be important, and where the area, from the value of land, might be increased without much increase of cost in this respect; which within the immediate metropolis could not be the case, because of the value of the land.

It appears to your committee very undesirable to adopt the change suggested of calling the smaller houses first rates, and so upwards, it being at variance with all practice, not only in reference to buildings, but other matters also. The largest vessel is called a first-rate, and there would be an obvious absurdity in the announcement, that a fifth-rate house in Belgrave-square was to be submitted to competition. The third class may be easily designated as a class by itself; the limits as to extreme of size and height in each of the two first classes being defined, all buildings exceeding those limits would be taken out of those classes as they now are, and would not need to be designated by a rate under them; but if it be considered imperative to place them in a rate, then they may be called an extra rate.

Schedule C, page 60.—No authority can compel the shutting of these doors, but if they are considered desirable, then it is submitted that the size should be increased, and it is suggested that if the opening were allowed to be not more than 9ft. by 8ft., leaving it to the discretion of the parties to plan the height or width within those limits, as they pleased, much advantage would be afforded; and further, it is suggested that the piers should be omitted, as they will occupy great space, impose considerable additional expense, afford no important additional security against fire, and would also prevent the use of sliding-doors, which under some circumstances would be a most desirable arrangement, on account of the small area they would occupy.

The limit as to stables appears unnecessary, and would in some cases be vexatious.

Schedule C.—Green-houses and aviaries are so unimportant in their character, and affect the question of health, or risk by fire, so little, that it is submitted they might be left altogether out of the supervision, particularly when detached from the house.

Schedule D, Part 1, page 68.—It is submitted, that if the Act provides sufficient walls, private interest is the best security for their being placed upon proper foundations; and as to natural solid strata, the expression itself is too vague to be used in an Act of Parliament in this way.

Materials.—The word stock should be omitted, being a trade name for a particular description of brick, leaving the description—good sound bricks.

Construction.—This can only be properly illustrated by a sketch, because a course of bricks and a course of stone may differ very widely, and if the width at the bottom is defined, it may then be stipulated that the wall shall not be brought into its thickness in less than a certain height.

Width.—The increase of 9in. on a 9in. wall is unnecessary; if it was made 4½in., and to the thicker walls 9in., enough would be provided; or it might stipulate that the footings should spread to one-half more than the net width of the wall.

Height.—This would be unnecessary alto[illegible]